

# BOOK REVIEWS

CALIFORNIA MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

**PAEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY**—Edited by Hamish Watson, T.D., M.D. (Ed.), F.R.C.P. (Ed.), M.R.C.P. (Lond.), consultant physician and cardiologist, Dundee Group of Teaching Hospitals, and senior lecturer in clinical cardiology and paediatric cardiology, University of Dundee. The C. V. Mosby Co., 3207 Washington Boulevard, St. Louis, Mo. (63103), 1968. 996 pages, \$36.50.

During the last three years, a number of encyclopedias of pediatric cardiology have been published. Dr. Watson's *Paediatric Cardiology* is the latest of the multiple contributor volumes. The general chapter arrangement of this book is similar to others. A few general chapters precede discussion of specific lesions. The embryology chapter is well illustrated and Rudolph's chapters concerning fetal and pulmonary circulation are amongst the highlights of the book. The electrocardiography chapter is well written and contains many useful charts. This is the only pediatric cardiology textbook to devote a chapter to tropical diseases of the heart. It is surprising that so little attention is accorded to vectorcardiography in a modern textbook. The cardiac catheterization chapter is particularly weak and the radiology chapter neglected discussion of quantitative chamber volumes, an important feature of modern cardiology. The chapters concerning specific lesions are generally acceptable, but lack detailed natural history information. Although Cooley concluded the book with a short chapter concerning operative features of congenital cardiac disease, this would seem inadequate for a subspecialty so closely aligned to cardiac surgery. A cardiac pharmacology chapter would have been a most useful addition.

In final analysis, *Paediatric Cardiology* has some serious deletions, and probably would not be as suitable as other books covering the same area if one were restricted to a single volume dealing with pediatric cardiology. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that it can serve as a reference, particularly if complemented with one or more of the other recent texts.

STANLEY J. GOLDBERG, M.D.

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**THE FEAR OF WOMEN** — Wolfgang Lederer, M.D. Grune and Stratton, Inc., 381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. (10016), 1968. 360 pages, \$12.50.

It is unfortunate that a book of such exquisite brilliance must bear a limited and misleading title. I am afraid that an appeal on the jacket to paperback curiosity will obscure the intent of the author and drive away the very souls who would find appreciation in the heart of the book, which is an epic for any shelf.

More than the title would imply this is a history of the depiction of the female concept. Perhaps one might think of it as "Woman, The Distorted Legend," or "The Feminine Image in Art and Fable."

The colorful and appealing background of Dr. Lederer is displayed on the paper cover by the Park Avenue publisher to lure the browser, but modestly omitted in the

book itself, where it belongs. Born in Vienna, this scholar and soldier is Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco.

The introduction is a nauseating hurdle to get over as quickly as possible. In it Dr. Lederer, to make his point, beats the psychiatric tom-tom by conjuring up a dread of women supposed secretly to pervade the masculine world and lead to all manner of perversions, neuroses, and strange behavior, unto the ultimate destruction of the universe. As a gynecologist I feel somewhat deprived that I cannot revel with him in this moon thing about fellow humans.

The fruit of the endeavor, if the author will pardon the expression, is strewn throughout the main text. He begins with Freudian and post-Freudian voodooism to support the Oedipus cults and to mystify the external genitalia of woman, such as they are.

Freud, you will recall, came into the tabloids and drawing rooms in the 20's with sex as the center of the universe. After a brief play he was considered a Goliath slain by a grain of salt, but in the 60's he is up again for capital gains.

As a gem of Merlinism he is quoted as stating that Medusa's head represents the vulva. And to gild that one, he goes on to make penises of the snake-like hairs of the severed (castrated yet) caput. In my dotage I'm beginning to think that Sigmund was a little meshugge.

And so it follows that the old penis-envy presumption is flaunted again, for all it's worth and more.

A chapter on the Fat Venus is enlightening and interesting, especially in these high caloric times, and displays a worship of female figures in stone and other materials over the thousands of years that have gone. Illustrations are offered showing engaging variations in the generous proportions. The historical record is fascinating, and the restraint shown in interpretation is reassuring.

Maternity and breast feeding are idolized in primitive symbolism. The theme is archaic and boring. A great deal is made of ochre as the "oldest lasting pigment approaching red" and its presence in art. As you may have guessed, it is supposed to signify menstrual blood, and we launch into the same old litany we read in high school, steaming with academic spiritualistic vocabulary. You could smell "tabu" and "unclean" coming up on each succeeding page.

It may be that this book is written in part from the couch. In his chapter "Frau Welt, Or The Perfume of Decay," the text reads:

"I can still vividly recall something else about old women—not their appearance, but their smell. Perhaps it is something about post-menopausal chemistry; more likely it had to do with certain physical neglect once physical charms were past. At any rate, what with modern hygiene and modern perfume, I